AN

ADDRESS

TO THE

PUBLIC,

ON THE

POLYGRAPHIC ART,

OR THE

COPYING OR MULTIPLYING

PICTURES,

IN

OIL COLOURS,

BY A

CHYMICAL AND MECHANICAL PROCESS,

THE INVENTION OF

MR. JOSEPH BOOTH,

PORTRAIT PAINTER.

Utque Artes pariat Solertia nutriat usus.

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BRITANNICVM

OF THE

POLYGRAPHIC ART.

MECHANICAL INVENTION is one of the great pillars that support the grandeur of the Britiſh Empire. Though there are various manufactures and arts, in which other nations, eſpecially the Germans, equal us, in reſpect of excellence; with regard to expedition we are unrivalled. Hence, notwithſtanding the high expence of living, and the growing preſſure of accumulated taxes, in articles of iron, ſteel, wool, cotton, turnery, earthen ware, and others, we are able to underſell nations where labour is twice as cheap as in England, the expence of living twice as low, and taxes more than twice as moderate. Of mechanical inventions in general.

BUT it was reſerved to Mr. BOOTH, the author of this invention of multiplying pictures in oil- The inventor and nature of this art.

colours, with all the properties of the original paintings, whether in regard to outline, expreſſion, ſize, variety of tints, or other circumſtances, to apply with ſucceſs, Mechanical invention, and particularly the power of Chymiſtry, to the diffuſion, perpetuation, and, in ſome reſpects, even the improvement of the moſt generally pleaſing and captivating of the liberal arts.

Name applied to this art.

THE multiplying or copying pictures in oil colours by a mechanical and chymical proceſs, as invented by Mr. BOOTH, was at firſt ſtiled POLYPLASIOSMOS, a Greek word, ſignifying multiplication. But the Gentlemen who have united themſelves, with the inventor, into a Society, for the purpoſe of protecting and patronizing this ingenious art, have determined to deſign it, in future, by the title of POLYGRAPHIC: a term equally calculated to diſtinguiſh it from other attempts of copying Pictures; and, at the ſame time, more analogous, and more expreſſive of the invention in queſtion, the grand object, and diſtinguiſhing property, or characteriſtic of which, is, to produce many pictures.

Its utility.

THE great end and advantage of the Polygraphic Art, then, is, that by a mechanical and chymical proceſs, without any injury whatever

to

to the original painting, it produces ſuch an exact copy, or likeneſs, as cannot, without difficulty and cloſe attention, be diſtinguiſhed from the archetype, at the diſtance from which every good picture ought to be viewed; while the price it can be delivered at to the public, is a mere trifle, commonly under, but never exceeding the tenth part of the value of the original. The experience of twelve years, renders it probable, and, indeed, almoſt certain, that theſe pictures, being done in oil colours, will, at leaſt, equal their originals, in point of duration. Duration of the colours.

Of the perfection to which the inventor of the Polygraphic Art, ſupported by the other members of the Polygraphic Society, has been enabled to raiſe it, at a great expence of money and of time, the public will judge.

The originals are always intended to be ſhewn with the copies, in a public exhibition, placed in ſuch a manner that the public will be able to compare one with the other in the ſame point of view, and determine of their perfections and defects, and how near a copy they are to the originals from whence they are taken. Originals exhibited with the copies.

Original not in the leaſt injured, but rendered more valuable.

As the original picture receives not the leaſt injury from the operation of multiplying copies, ſo neither does it ſuffer any diminution in point of value. On the contrary, the more that copies of any piece of painting are multiplied, and the more widely they are diffuſed, like the Cartoons, or the Madonna della Sedia of the divine Raphael, they become more known, in greater repute, and of higher value; while the Polygraphic copies will hold the next rank in the eſtimation of the Connoiſſeur, from the cloſeneſs of the imitation.

Painting conſidered under three different views.

PAINTING may be conſidered under three different views: firſt, as an ingenious art; ſecondly, as influencing morals; and thirdly, as an object of policy and an article of commerce. In all theſe reſpects the invention now offered to the patronage of the public will be found worthy, it is hoped, of their countenance and protection. With regard to the firſt of theſe conſiderations, whatever ingenuity and ſkill may be diſplayed by the painter, whatever emotion may be excited by fancy combining, from the ſtores of nature and hiſtory, ſeparate particulars and facts in unity of deſign, whatever, in a word, the moſt ardent and moſt cultivated genius can invent, will be found to be promoted and encouraged by the Polygraphic Art. For this invention is not neceſſarily

neceſſarily confined in its exerciſe or application, to ſuch paintings as are already in the poſſeſſion of the public. New deſigns may be formed which this art may multiply. And as no copy can be made without an original, and as the Polygraphic Society will make a point of having a certain number of new ſubjects done for them every year, the intereſt of living Artiſts, and eſpecially of the Britiſh Painters, inſtead of being injured by this mechanical and chymical proceſs, will be greatly promoted. And, as it will encreaſe the employment of eminent artiſts, ſo it will contribute, in no ſmall degree, to the improvement of ſtudents, who, being accuſtomed to imitate the ſtyle and manner, will catch, in ſome degree, the genius of the greateſt maſters, and attain to diſtinguiſhed excellence in grandeur and elegance of contour, correctneſs of deſign, brilliant colouring, and well effected maſs of light and ſhade. On this head, let it be further obſerved, that the firſt introduction of young artiſts into practice and fame, is commonly that of portrait-painting, a branch of buſineſs which will ſtill remain in their hands, and which the facility of multiplying copies of originals will infallibly tend to encreaſe. And, in general, at a time when we have many painters of eſtabliſhed reputation, and others are riſing into fame, an invention, which by a general diffuſion of the moſt

Artiſts encouraged by this diſcovery.

moſt admired ſubjects creates a more general taſte for the arts, cannot but have a favourable influence on the fortunes of artiſts; Mechanical Inventions of every kind, by reducing the price of commodities and manufactures, multiply cuſtomers, and extend their ſale: ſo that thoſe who at firſt are alarmed by their introduction, reap, in the iſſue, great advantage therefrom. The invention of cotton mills at firſt excited among the labouring manufacturers of cotton, yarn, and ſtuffs in Lancaſhire a general alarm, yet the extenſion of trade, by the lowering the price, and encreaſing the demand, which thoſe mills have occaſioned, has rather augmented the number of hands employed in the manufactures of cotton than diminiſhed them. In like manner, may we not fairly ſuppoſe, that the multiplication of pictures, of capital and approved maſters, may cheriſh and diffuſe a general taſte for painting, and thereby give employment and encouragement to the maſters and adepts in that imitative art? At preſent fine paintings, are to be purchaſed only by men in the poſſeſſion of large fortunes. Reduce their price; they may be purchaſed, and will be purchaſed by men of middling, and even of humble fortunes. By this means the uſe and love of paintings, and even the deſire of having originals will be encreaſed; few houſes will be without

without paintings of one ſort or another; and the ingenious artiſt will find from a multiplication of pictures, ſuch a diffuſion of taſte for painting, that an addition of patrons and conſequent employ will of courſe take place. He will likewiſe be able to perform ſuch deſigns, as will induce the proprietors of the Polygraphic Art to treat with him for the copy-right of the original, in the ſame manner that bookſellers treat with authors.

BEFORE the invention of printing, books were ſo dear that they were within the compaſs only of Lords and Princes, or men in general of Princely fortunes. The preſs has put books in the hands of all ranks of men; and ſo, it may be reaſonably preſumed, this invention will adorn the halls and other apartments of all ranks and orders of the people. And, as the art of printing has multiplied Authors, ſo that of Polygraphy will, in all probability, encreaſe the number of painters.

THE ſame thing, however paradoxical it may at firſt ſight appear, may be predicted with reſpect to engravers, whoſe art has ever been looked on, and juſtly, as an ingenious acquiſition to the ſtores of elegant amuſement; and in many buſineſſes as particularly uſeful. The inventor and

Engraving promoted by this art.

and the patrons of the Polygraphic Art, are very far from entertaining a wiſh, and if they did, they never could hope that it would ever, in any degree diſcourage engraving. It will in all probability extend it, and bring it more and more into general vogue and requeſt, among all orders and conditions of men. Not only will ſuch perſons as delight in prints, continue to purchaſe prints, as thoſe who take pleaſure in pictures, will purchaſe pictures, when theſe are within the compaſs of their fortune; but the multiplication of pictures, by the general diffuſion of a taſte for painting, inſtead of giving a check to the ingenious art of engraving, will tend greatly to encourage it; and theſe ſiſter arts muſt ſhare one common fate, and riſe and fall together.

Other good effects of this invention.

THE inventor and the patrons of the Polygraphic Art, anxious to vindicate this diſcovery, and the uſe they intend to make of it, from falſe anticipations, beg leave to confirm and illuſtrate the foregoing poſition. The whole of the arts and ſciences are linked together in one chain, and taſte and proficiency in any one of them, naturally leads to taſte and proficiency in others. It is the object of ſcience to trace the laws, and of the liberal arts to imitate the appearances of nature. In nature, therefore, they meet and are concentrated;

concentrated; and he who is converſant with one of them, from their vicinity and alliance with each other, has an opportunity, and is naturally induced to form an acquaintance and intimacy with the reſt. Accordingly, in every age, and every nation, the arts and ſciences, the ſiſter Muſes go hand in hand, and advance in their collateral courſes in the moſt perfect harmony. Does a taſte for Architecture repel, and deſtroy a taſte for painting? Does a taſte for painting imply an averſion to poetry? or is the mind and heart which is ſenſible to the charms of poetical fancy and deſign, indifferent to the ſtrains of muſic? No: It is quite otherwiſe. It is in the beautiful and magnificent palace that we naturally look for paintings. The mind that delights in the contemplation of landſcape and hiſtorical painting, reliſhes alſo a well conducted epic poem, or hiſtory: and the inveſtigation of cauſe and effect, again, in legitimate hiſtorical compoſition, is near a-kin to inveſtigation of every kind, and to the exerciſe of the reaſoning faculty in general, whether it be employed in morality, pneumatics, phyſics, or in mathematics, pure or mixed.

As all the Arts and Sciences, then, are harmoniouſly connected, and mutually influence and ſupport each other, it is not unreaſonable to ſup-

poſe that the general diffuſion of a taſte for painting will be accompanied with a general diffuſion of a taſte for engraving, as well as ſculpture, ſtatuary and every kindred art. Pictures and prints have their reſpective advantages; and both may be ſought after, and admired by the ſame perſon. It will readily be allowed that prints are not by any means ſuch proper articles of furniture as paintings: for the moſt characteriſtical beauties of prints, are in a great meaſure loſt when framed, glazed, and diſpoſed as ornaments for large rooms, halls, and galleries. The delicate touch of the engraving tool loſes it's enchanting effect, when placed at any diſtance from the eye. The fineſt engravings are acccordingly kept in ſmall cabinets or in port folios; a ſituation which undoubtedly furniſhes the moſt commodious opportunities of contemplating their beauties.

Paintings preferable to prints, as ornamental furniture.

Having thus conſidered the invention of Polygraphy as an art, and ſhewn the favourable influence it will have on the advancement and diffuſion of painting, engraving, and all kindred arts; we proceed under the ſecond view, in which we ſaid, painting might be conſidered; to obſerve that the multiplication of pictures by means of the invention of the Polygraphic Art, has a tendency to ſtrengthen religious principles

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and conceptions, and to improve the morals of the people. The moſt ſtriking ſcenes recorded in the ſacred ſcripture, faithfully delineated by the glowing pencil, paſs into the minds even of the rudeſt beholders, with equal eaſe, efficacy, and delight, and awaken thoſe ſentiments of devotion and love, which they are ſo well fitted to inſpire. And, independently of the effect of ſubjects taken from the Sacred Scriptures, painting ſoftens and humanizes the mind, and purifies it from groſs and pernicious appetites and paſſions, by cheriſhing a taſte for elegant and virtuous pleaſures. It inſpires, like the other liberal arts and moral ſciences, a ſocial ſweetneſs of diſpoſition. A taſte for the fine arts is incompatible with ferocity of manners. It even reſtrains the fury of war, and by exerciſing ſympathy, promotes friendly intercourſe, peace and good will among men. Polite literature and the fine arts exhibit repreſentations of human nature, placed in various intereſting ſituations. The reader, as well as the amateur, enters by ſympathy into a thouſand characters, circumſtances, and ſituations, and is influenced by a thouſand ſocial and humane emotions, which would not have been excited in his breaſt, by all the occurrences and viciſſitudes of the moſt variegated life. Thus they become in ſome meaſure citizens of the world. The antipathies

Happy conſequences of the liberal arts in general.

and prejudices which ſet men at variance with one another, are gradually worn off. The enlarged mind acquires an habit of indulgence and forbearance. Nothing that belongs to human nature; no peculiarity in national character, no failing or imperfection of the individual member of ſociety moves either the ridicule or the averſion of the ingenuous mind, accuſtomed to contemplate nature and humanity under an infinite variety of forms, and to feel that ſentiment ſo often quoted from the Latin comic Poet, " I myſelf am a man, and I cannot re-" main untouched by the joys or ſorrows of " human nature." Painting, in particular, is favourable to virtue: it teaches important leſſons in a language univerſally underſtood: and by recording merit, excites a noble and virtuous emulation. It is foreign to the preſent purpoſe indeed to celebrate the praiſes of the liberal arts; but it is difficult to abſtain from ſome ſally of panegyric, when the domain of the imitative art is on the point of being ſo greatly enlarged, and the proſpect that is opened by the Polygraphic Invention, is ſo pleaſing, as well as vaſt and unbounded.—What influence may not this invention have over the purſuits and pleaſures of men? and what poliſh may it not give to their manners?

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But it is, in a political and commercial light, which was the third view, as was obſerved, in which painting might be conſidered, that this multiplying art is of the higheſt importance. It muſt appear obvious to every perſon of diſcernment, that painting, as an art, contributes in an eminent degree to the grandeur and conſequence of a nation. It tends to raiſe a national character, and to invite to the countries in which it flouriſhes, travellers of diſtinction from other kingdoms: the invention of Polygraphy encourages a genius for painting, and, by reducing the prices of the ornamental branches of that art, it will give an air of elegance, and magnificence, to our houſes in the eye of foreigners, who will be tempted to carry into their own countries thoſe articles of ſplendid furniture which are purchaſed at ſo eaſy a rate in this. And thus this invention, it is to be hoped, will prove no inconſiderable ſource of national wealth. But on the important head of its utility it will be proper to ſpeak at greater length.

This art conſidered in a commerci

Real grandeur does not conſiſt in a profuſion of gold and tinſel ſhew, which dazzles the ſight by the vividneſs and richneſs of colour, but neither amuſes the fancy nor engages the heart. The eye is never ſo much pleaſed, as when the object of perception gives exerciſe to the fancy, and calls into

into action the various energies of the mind: a purpoſe for which allegorical and hiſtorical paintings are particularly adapted.

THERE is no method now in uſe, of producing an expreſſive, intereſting, and highly finiſhed picture, that is not attended with the moſt exquiſite pains and trouble. As pieces of this kind are to be produced only by the cloſeſt labour and application, they are neceſſarily advanced to ſo great a price that very few can afford to purchaſe them. Indeed highly finiſhed pictures are ſeldom to be met with at all. By this new method of drawing and colouring, however, all the effect of the finiſhed graces and perfections will be introduced, of which paintings are ſuſceptible. The prices now given for the finiſhed paintings of the Flemiſh and Italian maſters ſufficiently evince the value of the copies that are made, with ſuch exactneſs, by the Polygraphic Art. And, from this circumſtance, the author, and patrons and proprietors of this invention, are encouraged to hope for the public countenance and protection, as they will produce pictures for a mere trifle, poſſeſſed of a degree of elegance, and perfection of colouring and varniſhing, as cannot be equalled but by an immenſity of labour in a firſt-rate artiſt.

COPIES of good originals, diffuſed through the country at a cheap rate, will induce many gentlemen to purchaſe them who never would have thought of giving the value of high-prized original pictures; but though beginning with ſuch a trifle, they may imbibe a taſte for painting, be induced to enlarge the collection, and, by degrees, gain ſuch a taſte and knowledge of the art, as not to be content with copies alone; but, in the end, will be urged on to beſpeak originals, of the beſt maſters, and thus become patrons and encouragers of the art. This has generally happened with moſt gentlemen who have made capital collections of paintings. It has often been from a ſmall beginning, perhaps from a ſingle picture, that they have been led to form thoſe collections, which are now the admiration of every perſon of taſte.

A general love of painting excited by this art.

IT is well known that very conſiderable ſums of money are annually carried out of this kingdom, for the purchaſe of foreign paintings, both copies and originals, and that in this traffic many impoſitions have been made, and frauds committed. The invention of Polygraphy evidently tends to remedy theſe diſadvantages and abuſes, while, at the ſame time, it does not oppoſe itſelf to the honeſt induſtry and ingenuity of the collector and dealer in pictures, who has

has the ſame market as uſual; and there is no doubt of the Polygraphic copies becoming hereafter a good object of ſpeculation, from an encreaſe of value, as the Society mean to adhere to the mode of ſtriking off only a certain number of copies of each ſubject, which, when finiſhed, the apparatus is deſtroyed, and no more done of ſuch ſubject by means of the Polygraphic Art. In conſequence, when that number is ſold and diſtributed, ſuch of them as may, by eventual circumſtances, come to ſale, will open as extenſive a field for advantageous traffic as originals. Theſe productions muſt likewiſe become a ſafe adventure for foreign markets, in every country where the polite arts are encouraged.

An advantageous field of traffic.

It is unneceſſary to diſplay more fully the utility of the Polygraphic Art. Other advantages, beſides thoſe that have been here enumerated, will be diſcovered by time and experience, which not only unfold the myſteries of nature, but alſo new purpoſes to which theſe diſcoveries may be applied.

In the mean time it may be ſafely affirmed, that the Polygraphic Invention, inſtead of injuring, will promote the art of painting, by encreaſing the demand for pictures, by preſerving the ſtyle and the maſterly colouring of the greateſt

greateſt artiſts in their genuine and natural taſte, handing them down unimpaired to the lateſt poſterity, diſplaying their peculiar excellencies, and tracing their analogies to each other. In one word, this invention may be conſidered, in every reſpect, as being *that* to painting, which engraving is to deſign, and which the art of printing is to that of writing.

The Inventor and Proprietors of the Polygraphic Art, although they have embarked a very large property on the maturation and improvement of this invention, have rejected ſuch offers from the Continent as would at once indemnify their expence, and beſtow a preſent reward, truſting that the moſt liberal, as well as the moſt pleaſing recompence for ingenuity and patient toil, is to be found where they would wiſh to find it, not in a foreign, but in their own country; not under an arbitrary, but a free government; and in a land that has exhibited ſo many examples of ingenious invention, and knows ſo well how to appreciate improvement in every mechanical, and every liberal art. While, therefore, they ſolicit the patronage of all liberal and cultivated minds in every quarter and kingdom of the world, to their own countrymen they look up with anxious hope, that they will afford that encouragement at home, which the proprietors

of

of this invention have declined to accept abroad; that they will protect it from the diſcouraging effects of intereſted and raſh inſinuation; that they will not give credit to vague aſſertions and repreſentations; but that they will honour the ſpecimens they have exhibited of their art with candid attention, ſo that in the judgment they form, they may be guided, not by uncertain reports, but by their own ſenſe and obſervation.

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